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ABSTRACT

A brief overview of discourse analysis is presented, followed by: (1) a description of cross-cultural discourse analysis; (2) an explanation of how cross-cultural discourse analysis applies to language for special purposes (LSP) in general; and (3) a discussion of selected areas for ongoing and future research areas. Emphasis is on discourse analysis as the study of language in context, as it is used in actual textual settings and the impact of context upon the production of texts. The role of the socio-cultural environment of the writer and reader must be taken into account. Some research issues being investigated at Michigan State University that have been raised by the application of cross-cultural discourse analysis to both written and spoken texts from the realms of German business and economics are noted. The results will serve as the basis for a set of materials for teaching German for Business and Economics to American students. (LB)

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Cross-cultural Discourse Analysis in German for Business and Economics: A New Paradigm

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Introduction

"Discourse analysis" is certainly not a new tool of literary and linguistic research; in the realm of literary analysis it has been around at least since the beginnings of biblical interpretation and in the area of linguistic analysis it has been a subject of debate for the last 25 years. "Cross-cultural discourse analysis" also has its roots in seminal research performed in the late '60's, but it did not begin to take hold as a distinct branch of linguistic inquiry until about five years ago. And, as yet, there has been very little application of the discoveries and hypotheses issuing from this branch of linguistics into the area of foreign language for special purposes. Indeed most of the research and application of theory from cross-cultural discourse analysis in the United States and other English speaking countries has been within the area of English as a Second Language and English for Special Purposes, normally regarded as specialized areas within applied linguistics. As "foreign language" professionals, therefore, we often do not see or hear about the results of this research since it is presented at conferences we normally do not attend and written about in journals to which we do not subscribe.

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It is the purpose of this introductory presentation, therefore, to provide (1) a brief overview of "discourse analysis," (2) a description of "cross-cultural discourse analysis," (3) an explanation of how "cross-cultural discourse analysis" applies to LSP in general, and (4) a discussion of selected areas for on-going and future research areas. The papers which follow in this conference session will be in the nature of reports on current research efforts in the area of cross-cultural discourse analysis of German for business and economics. This research is being undertaken as a part of a larger project supported through grants obtained in collaboration with the International Business Centers at Michigan State University. Based upon this research and our 13 years of experience with teaching "business German," we are currently preparing a multi-media textbook/computer software package, entitled German for Business and Economics, for publication.

Discourse Analysis

"Discourse Analysis," as was implied above, has many different definitions, depending primarily upon the area in which it is used, including literature, rhetoric, functional linguistics, formal linguistics, sociolinguistics, etc. But, common to all of the definitions is the idea that discourse analysis involves the study of language beyond the word and sentence level. In addition, all adherents to "discourse analysis" would agree that "the most basic division in discourse is that between the analysis of oral and written language." (Grabe, Discourse 102) As the respected text analyst deBeaugrande wrote in 1984, "It is now recognized that writing and speech are distinct systems: the norms and functions of each system fit a given situation better than those of the other...There is hardly a dimension of textuality or text processing that does not reflect some significant difference between the spoken and written modalities. " (deBeaugrande quoted in Grabe, Discourse 103)

In "discourse analysis" research, therefore, the division between writing and speech as distinct systems is used as a basis for research into:

1. the nature of spoken and written texts on a more abstract level
2. the spoken or written text as product (analysis of corpora)
3. the spoken or written text as process (analysis of generation of texts)
4. the interdependency of text as product and process.

In addition, all discourse analysis involves the study of language in context, that is, language as it is used in actual textual settings and the impact of context upon the production of texts. Thus, discourse or text analysis (as it is sometimes called) goes beyond earlier linguistic analyses of text which were preoccupied with semantics, grammar, and syntax. Text analysis provides a new dimension of study which complements semantic, grammatical and syntactical analyses. Indeed it might be likened to a move into a third dimension of textual analysis, where semantic/grammatical/syntactical analyses represent two-dimensional approaches, rather flat and not fully representational. Text or discourse analysis brings a third dimension into our understanding of language, which would be analogous to the difference between observing a real pencil which we hold in our hands and seeing a two-dimensional drawing of a pencil. To discourse or text analysts the text is a multidimensional structure of a highly complex nature which cannot "be observed or studied apart from the social context in which its exists and from which it receives it purpose." (Grabe, Discourse 106) If texts themselves are multidimensional, then it stands to reason that two-dimensional approaches to text analysis are incomplete at best and potentially misleading.

The most prolific area of research to date is that of "text as product." Here text linguists are busy formulating theories of the structure of written and spoken texts which can account for all of the various features of communication reflected in a text. (Grabe, Discourse 107) There seems to be one descriptive text model emerging from all of the

various research efforts, a model which contains six interrelated components: syntax, semantics, cohesion, coherence, posture, and lexicon. (Grabe, Discourse 108-9)
The following diagram represents these components in somewhat simplified form:

Language Level	**Surface Aspects (more explicit)**	**Underlying Aspects (more implicit)**
Syntactic Level	Syntax	Semantics
Textual Level	Cohesion	Coherence
Interpersonal Level	Posture	Stance

In this diagram, syntax and semantics are basically the sentence level systems of structure and organization; cohesion and coherence parallel syntax and semantics as surface and underlying structure, while posture and stance represent the surface and underlying structure of the writer to the reader. Sentence level analyses are typically based on the counting of various constructions and categories. Textual level analyses deal with the formal features of text beyond the sentence level; when dealing with cohesion one is looking at the surface forms which bind sentences or clausal units together; when dealing with coherence one is looking at the underlying relationship between propositions in the text and their relationship to the organizational scheme of the text. Interpersonal level analyses explore the writer's attitude to the reader and to the subject matter. Posture refers to surface linguistic signals in the text (use of subjunctives, imperatives, questions, etc)

which indicate the writer's attitude; stance refers to interpersonal relations defining a text, possibly along the lines of opposing pairs such as distance/solidarity, superior/equal, oblique/confronted etc. (Grabe, Discourse 109-112) The interpersonal level is that which reveals the author's intentions.

There are those involved in text or discourse analysis who believe, however, that no amount of analysis of text, i.e. study of the text as product, can fully inform us as to the construction of text, i.e. the process of composing a text. Many recent research projects have focused on observations of the composing process (primarily for written texts) with students involved in recall, thinking-aloud protocols while composing, etc. This is an area in which far more research is necessary and, unfortunately, in which research results are not keeping pace with the needs of teachers who are confronted with the immense task of teaching writing, the "process" which creates texts. Research in writing "lacks a coherent model to guide research and to inform instruction." (Grabe, Discourse 115) This deficit may, however, be the result of separating the inquiry into "product" and "process" oriented analysis. Many involved in text analysis research now see the need to explore texts in a much more complex interdependency as both product and process.

Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis

Up to this point we have been discussing a third dimension in textual analysis--we are about to cross, however, into a fourth. If, as we stated above, any spoken or written text is a multidimensional structure of a highly complex nature which cannot "be observed or studied apart from the social context in which its exists and from which it receives it purpose," then it stands to reason that an understanding of cultural factors must play an extremely important role in the analysis of that text. In fact, the "third dimension" of which we spoke earlier is, in essence, shaped by culture. The aspects of text analysis which we were discussing would be invalid without a recognition of the role of the socio-cultural

environment of the writer and reader. A fourth dimension to textual analysis is added, however, when we consider the field of "cross-cultural" discourse analysis, since it involves comparison and contrast of similar text types across cultures.

Once again, this is an area in which the research has gone forward primarily within ESL. It received its impetus in the '60's from research into the teaching of reading and writing for academic purposes to students of English as a second language coming primarily from third-world countries. Teachers were noting that, although these students were gaining increased mastery of grammatical and syntactic features of English, they still were having extraordinary difficulties with reading comprehension of academic texts and with organizing academic assignments appropriately. It was Kaplan who carried out the seminal research in this area in the mid 1960's and early 1970's, postulating the basic outlines of what has come to be known as contrastive rhetoric.

Basically, contrastive rhetoric is "the study of L1 rhetorical influences on the organization of text in an L2, on audience considerations, on goal definition; it seeks to define L1 influences on text coherence, on perceived audience awareness, and on rhetorical context features." (Grabe, Rhetoric 266) In essence, it was found that speakers of, for example, Hindi, tend to carry over text strategies such as organizational schema from the native language into the English for academic purposes they are learning. Throughout the 70's and on into the 80's and 90's many studies concentrating on contrastive written text analyses of English and various less-frequently taught languages have been carried out. (Grabe, Rhetoric 268) The results indicate that different languages reveal "different organizational expectations in written text and demand different types of inferences.

Different languages have different preferences in textual organization--preferences reflected in syntactic and other textual differences, particularly among those features considered to be discourse sensitive or to influence the structural organization of the text." (Grabe, Rhetoric 264) Most Asian languages, for instance, exhibit a circular organizational pattern, while English texts are extremely linear in development. For purposes of academic

writing, all English speakers are taught to present a thesis at the beginning of the paper and develop the argument to support the thesis in clear linear progression. Digression is considered inappropriate. There are, however, many cultures in which digression is particularly valued or in which the argument is developed in a more parallel fashion rather than linearly.

Interestingly, studies have shown that students tend to develop an "interrhetoric" paralleling the idea of "interlanguage," in their progress toward mastering writing tasks in the L2. These students carry over to varying degrees the rhetorical structures of their native language, just as they carry over features of the grammar and syntax of their L1 in their "interlanguage" stages of learning the L2. However, they run a much greater risk of remaining in the interrhetoric phase, because not all teachers are aware of the need to teach the rhetorical strategies of the L2 along with its grammar and syntax.

Since the early 80's there has also been ongoing research in contrastive rhetoric within the area of spoken language. The research has substantiated the findings within written text analysis, in that "patterns of interaction between speakers from two different language backgrounds indicate major variation in conversational styles, suggesting distinct patterns of preference in the organization of oral discourse." (Grabe, Rhetoric 268)

Written discourse, however, remains the primary research focus of cross-cultural discourse analysis. Within the realm of comparison of academic discourse in German and English, there has been only one active researcher, Michael Clyne at Monash University in Australia. Clyne had observed that differences in discourse patterns in German and English were sometimes operating as a barrier to the exchange of scholarship between the two related cultures. He therefore undertook a long term project involving cross-cultural text analysis of a large corpus of German and English academic texts. His research is on-going and is reported in stages; what has appeared so far is promising in its description of cultural differences in the organization of linguistic and sociological texts written by German and English speakers. He suggests that the differences he has found "may be

promoted by the education systems and by varying intellectual styles and attitudes to knowledge and content." (Clyne 211) Ms. Heinze will discuss certain results of Clyne's research and their use as a foundation for further discussion of German texts from the area of business and economics.

Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis and German for Business and Economics

If discourse analysis itself and its offshoot "cross-cultural" discourse analysis can be described as being in their infancy, research which deals with the application of the principles of cross-cultural discourse analysis to Language for Special Purposes can be said to be in a prenatal state. Once again, what has been accomplished to date has been exclusively within the area of ESP, i.e. English for Engineers, etc. When we turn to *foreign language* teaching in the United States, whether for special purposes or not, cross-cultural discourse analysis is simply not evident. This certainly has a lot to do with the traditional link of language study to literary study in the U.S.; but, in that respect, it is highly ironic that instructors routinely use discourse analysis (whether one calls it that or not) in their approaches to literary texts, but may totally ignore its use in other settings where they may be teaching non-literary texts.

I emphasize the particular research setting in the U.S. here, because both discourse analysis and its application to LSP have been the subject of investigation in Europe for some time. While the findings of European researchers can certainly be extremely helpful in our own inquiries into these areas, it should be remembered that the raw data of European studies are often more usable than the pedagogical or methodological suggestions offered by these researchers. European pedagogical theories and methodologies often differ sharply from the American and need to be adapted to the American cultural environment to be effective.

In addition, it should be noted that even "cross-cultural discourse analysis" itself takes on an extra added dimension when applied to spoken and written texts within Language for Special Purposes, such as German for Business and Economics, because we cross from the realm of the mainstream cultures into the subcultures of the American and German academic worlds, German and American business and, often, the culture within the culture of specific corporate identities. It is all extremely complex and will provide years of ongoing research projects by successive generations of graduate students.

Within the parameters of our current grant-supported project at Michigan State University, however, we are pursuing some key research issues raised by the application of cross-cultural discourse analysis to both written and spoken texts from the realms of business and economics. We hope that, in the final analysis, the results of this research will have served as the basis for an innovative set of materials for the teaching of German for Business and Economics to American students. These new materials will support the development of a high level of proficiency in American "business German" students, a proficiency which goes beyond the level of the mastery of *Fachlexik* and surface *Landeskunde* which seem to be the goal of currently available American "business German" materials. Until recently LSP research has remained largely bound to studies of *Fachlexik*, with some movement into the areas of descriptive grammar and syntax. We hope that our efforts will move GSP in the U.S., as well as the materials designed to teach it, out of this two-dimensional world into a far more realistic and infinitely more complex third and fourth dimension.

In order to give you some insight into the nature of this research, Karin Heinze will begin with a look at two informational texts from the German and American business environments, which she has analyzed on the basis of previous cross-cultural discourse analysis research. Her report will be followed by Anne Gramberg's brief account of her application of speech act theory to a cross-cultural analysis of German and American print auto advertising. In essence, Annes' research bridges the areas of spoken and written

texts, since she applies a descriptive theory from the realm of spoken language to written texts. The third report, by my colleague Tom Lovik, describes some findings within the area of spoken textual analysis from the German business world.

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